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the length of the river there were no less than twenty-eight wrecks and seventy-two sunken boats to be taken from the channels. This is a commentary both on the need of internal improvements and on the hazards of river transportation in 1866.

Maps of the Ohio river by Bonnécamps (1749), by Gordon (1766), and by Rufus Putnam (1804) are reproduced in this volume. Volume VIII., it should be said in explanation, is postponed for the present in bringing out the series.

EDWIN ERLE SPARKS.

Robert Morris, Patriot and Financier. By ELLIS PAXSON OBERHOLTZER, PH.D. (New York: The Macmillan Company; London: Macmillan and Company, Ltd. 1903. Pp. xi, 372.)

MR. OBERHOLTZER has the good fortune to be the first exploiter of the Robert Morris Papers, which were recently purchased for the Library of Congress. These manuscripts have a romantic history; apparently they were accessible to Sparks, then disappeared, were rediscovered by General Meredith Read in a French country town just as they were to be consigned to a paper-mill, and by him jealously guarded and withheld from the student's use. In 1876 Mr. Read confided the papers for a few weeks to Mr. Henry A. Homes, librarian of the New York State Library, and Mr. Homes published a brief memorandum of their contents. He also appended three or four pages of extracts from the correspondence. Later Professor Sumner in the preparation of *The Financier and the Finances of the American Revolution* endeavored to consult the papers, but, "it was not consistent with General Read's views" to grant the request. Upon Read's death the papers were purchased by Congress. Mr. Oberholtzer's description of the manuscript volumes is very brief, irritatingly so, when one considers their novelty and importance. Indeed, so far as the reader can judge, the slight bibliographical notes in the preface are simply transcripts of some of the statements of Homes. Apparently it was not the author's intention to make an academic contribution to American history. Although the material has been generously utilized, with appropriate quotations and dates, it is impossible for the reader to decide how much of the material has been used and what is the nature of that omitted. It seems most unfortunate that historical students cannot enjoy more fully the results of Mr. Oberholtzer's opportunities and experienced training.

As a readable biography, the work is a distinct success; its style is attractive, and there is shown throughout a sense of proportion and literary construction. Morris's command of the English language was far above the average of his time, and consequently his correspondence yields many gems to the skilful biographer. The life is written in a spirit of warm appreciation. Morris appears as a large-hearted American, a generous liver, accustomed to great schemes, desirous of accomplishing results, and consequently impatient of control. The author speaks of "his rarely sanguine temperament, his freedom from vanity, his sure and con-

fidant touch, and the human note in his life" (p. 286). The author considers that Morris's famous resignation letter in January, 1783, was meant to force Congress to accept his views and to make some definite provision for the debt. "While this motive may have meant some duplicity and implied some vanity to those industrious persons who had long planned his undoing, it will be adjudged an entirely patriotic motive in the light of all our information at the present day" (p. 196). The style of living adopted by Morris is justified, even from the standpoint of expediency. "His homes and carriages, his sumptuous hospitality, his sanguine and inflexible temper, which had contributed to breed confidence in his person in the first instance, must be maintained if the public were not to lose their faith." Morris made a "tactical error" in not settling his early accounts as soon as opportunity afforded; in that way he might have discomfited his enemies. He is credited with an important influence in helping Hamilton in his financial plans, especially in the preparation and working out of the funding bill and the tariff rates. The student of Revolutionary military history may be interested in noting that Oberholtzer does not discover anywhere in the diary that Morris took any part in persuading the generals to abandon the idea of an attack upon New York in order to make a sudden descent upon Cornwallis in Virginia. An interesting account is given of the conveyance of the French money from Boston to Philadelphia in 1781, and of more general importance is the description of Morris's opposition to specific supplies and his endeavors to substitute a contract system based upon cash requisitions. On page 161 is a description of Morris's "sensational operations" with foreign bills.

Three of the manuscript volumes which serve as the basis of this biography are private letter-books containing copies of letters written from December, 1794, to March, 1798, the period of Morris's financial embarrassment and his imprisonment as a debtor. The extracts from these letters are full of a melancholy interest; brave humor and pathos are intermingled. On November 22, 1797, while beset by officers at "The Hills", he wrote, "This bad weather is unfortunate, as it prevents anybody but duns coming hither, and as to them, nothing can keep them away"; on December 2, "I have been very busy this morning watching the man that is watching me."

The book is supplied with a good index; there is a bibliography of three pages; and six illustrations, including portraits and views of the several residences of Morris, add to the general attractiveness of the volume.

DAVIS R. DEWEY.